



# News Release

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November 14, 2002

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Educational Standards For Michigan Schools To Remain High Board Approves Revisions To Education YES!, AYP**

After months of work, the State Board of Education approved critical pieces of its new accreditation system as it moves forward to help every school building in Michigan become successful.

Board members approved an Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) formula, set a definition of proficiency, and made minor revisions to its Education YES! school accreditation system.

Sandy Kress, a former top aide to the Bush Administration and one of the architects of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, commended the State Board of Education and the Department of Education for its difficult and sometimes arduous work toward developing a 21st century accreditation system for schools.

"I think Michigan is on the path to becoming the country's leader for these important educational reforms," Kress said during the Board's morning Committee of the Whole meeting. Kress went on to then address Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Watkins directly, stating that his leadership has been evident to other state level educators around the country and has been significant as the state has reached this critical education crossroads.

Kress currently is on retainer with the National Business Roundtable and was brought in to work in Michigan with the State Board of Education by the Michigan Business Leaders For Educational Excellence (MBLEE).

"Michigan is ahead of the educational curve, in every sense of the word," Watkins said. "We have been able to align our state with some very stringent federal education requirements, while at the same time develop an extremely rigorous state accreditation system. These two systems will align with each other, but not intertwine."

The Board's Accreditation Advisory Committee, composed of nationally recognized education experts, presented its recommendations today, with Committee Member Dr. Ed Roeber stating that the overall goals of the committee's work with Education YES! are to "provide stability, while creating a system that can be simply understood and is technically sound."

According to the state's new definition of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), individual school formulas will be calculated as the higher percentage of students at the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) proficient level in reading and math who are in the state's lowest achieving subgroup of students, as follows: Students who are economically disadvantaged, Students from major racial and ethnic subgroups, Students with disabilities, and Students with limited English proficiency.

A school will be determined to have made AYP if its achievement levels are above its target goal for a given year, or if the percent of students who are not proficient is decreased by 10 percent annually.

Schools that continue to make AYP annually will always be considered as accredited, said Jeremy Hughes, Chief Academic Officer for the Department of Education, but schools that do not make AYP annually will not be eligible to receive an "A" composite letter grade as part of Education YES!.

Proficiency in Michigan will now be defined as those students who score at Level 1 (Exceeds Expectations) or Level 2 (Meets Expectations) on the MEAP test.

"This entire process clearly illustrates democracy at its finest," said Kathleen N. Straus, State Board of Education President. "We have engaged teachers, parents, and communities to develop a 21st Century accreditation tool that lifts up, and does not beat down, our schools, teachers, and children."

The State Board of Education will consider a critical piece of Education YES! next month, as it continues work on system cut scores at its regularly scheduled meeting on December 12.

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